

NPTC's redeployment process



Introduction

NPTC is a public sector organisation employing nearly 6,900 staff (SAP Business Objects, 2024a). It is imperative that public spending money is rightly safeguarded and used efficiently with redundancy costs being the council's third highest overall expenditure in the last financial year.

In the last financial year (2023/2024), NPTC paid out a total of £374,314.91 in redundancy costs. An increase of over £150,000 from the previous year (NPTC, 2021). A total of 40 employees were at deemed at risk of compulsory redundancy, with only 35% (15 employees) of those employees achieving redeployment. These figures argue the case for a review of the current redeployment process.

Subjective	TOTAL

2021/22 Redundancy Payments	204,855.78
2022/23 Redundancy Payments	219,604.40
2023/24 Redundancy Payments	374,314.91

It is inevitable that redundancies will occur across businesses to make savings and reduce costs, intensified by an inflation crunch (Kelly, 2022, Sheffield, 2024). Is NPTC's redeployment process is fit for purpose and withstand compulsory redundancies and endorse their pledge ***“Redeployment is a positive act which can enable the Council to maintain the skills and experience of valued employees”*** (NPTC, 2018).

The current procedure was last reviewed nearly six years ago and therefore, it could be considered that the process has become custom and practice rather than procedural.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cambridge Dictionary (2024) defines redeployment as ***“the act of moving employees, soldiers, equipment, etc. to a different place or using them in a more effective way”***.

The CIPD and ACAS were identified to research any best practice approaches for employers to imply and support their redeployment process.

ACAS (2024b) offers an overview on an employer's obligations to offer suitable alternative employment as part of a redundancy process, however, redeployment guidance was sparse

CIPD (2024) provided good practice guidelines which includes identifying generic transferrable skills, emphasising that employers should consider what an individual 'CAN' do, rather than what they 'CAN'T'. Particular importance was applied to effective communication and transparency throughout any process. Arguing that there is no such thing as 'too much' communication (Suff, 2020).

Policies were obtained from other public sector organisations for benchmarking purposes.



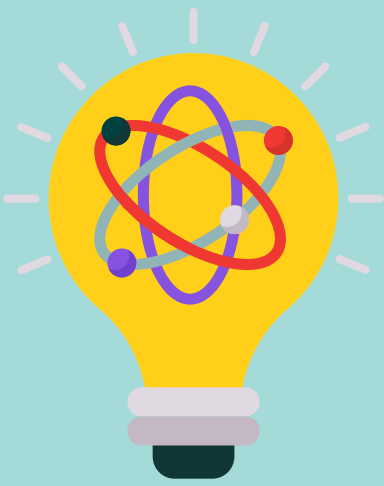


Methodology

The **aim** is to undertake a critical review of Neath Port Talbot Council's (NPTC) redeployment process and make recommendations for improving current practice with a view to reducing redundancies.

The **objectives** are as follows:

- To research and analyse existing literature relating to current best practice approaches to redeployment.
- To benchmark NPTC's current redeployment process against other public sector organisations.
- To review secondary data within NPTC relating to the current redeployment process.
- To conduct quantitative/qualitative primary research using a mixed method approach, through the use of surveys and interviews to establish any inconsistencies within the current redeployment process and what is currently working well.
- To make recommendations for improvement to the redeployment process to reduce redundancy costs and retain experienced professionals.



A Pragmatism approach was applied, supporting the research topic which ‘identifies whether there is a concern with applications-what works-and solutions to problems’ (Creswell et al, 2023).

A mixed method approach was used to integrate both qualitative and quantitative data, with Bazeley (2023) arguing that both sets of data can provide better insight and a stronger understanding of the problem.



FINDINGS

Benchmarking with Swansea Bay UHB (2021) and SWP (2013) policies, all set out clear principles to support successful redeployment. One notable variation was the 'freezing'/'withdrawal' of external advertisements. Whereas, NPTC's approach places the onus on recruiting managers to identify any 'prior consideration' applicants and trust that they consider these before other applicants.



Semi-structured interviews were held with six HR colleagues with common themes arguing that there is a 'stigma' associated with those on prior consideration and would 'redemption workshops' support managers in minimising this.

Redeployment survey was provided to individuals previously involved in the process and results indicate that whilst they were satisfied with the overall process, lack of communication was echoed.



Whilst elements of NPTC's process are working well, there are also flaws. There is clearly work to be done on improving communication and support needed for individuals to enhance their experience in a recruitment process.



A review of any external advertisements and identification of 'matching' those with generic transferrable skills to current vacancies will enhance success rates and retain skills and knowledge and promote 'culture-fit' (MacKenzie, 2013).

Further research in gaining an understanding of the process from a recruiting manager's perspective will provide an overall review. This will then support any recommendations for improving the current process.

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